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## SCIENCE AND RELIGION.<sup>1</sup>

IF science and religion are to continue to coexist it seems opposed to the conditions of modern thought to admit that this result can be brought about by the so-called "water-tight compartment" system which, even at the present time, is frequently extolled or considered possible.

On the one hand, indeed, modern science, after invading the domains of psychology, sociology, and morals, lays claim to study and examine every form of human life, without exception.

On the other hand, religion is conceived either as pure feeling or as a blend of feeling and knowledge. In the former conception, science regards it as but a crude datum which it must explain in accordance with its own principles, by bringing it analytically within the compass of scientifically known phenomena. Again, if it participates in knowledge, it cannot be radically isolated from science, for we cannot conceive of the possibility of two wholly heterogeneous truths.

In the following, science and religion are to be brought face to face with each other. The question, however, of the conditions that would bring about an intelligible relationship between two really distinct terms, is anything but simple. Identity is only a logical fiction; non-contradiction, a limitative condition. On the other hand, simple juxtaposition forms just that empirical relationship which

<sup>1</sup> [Argument for discussion by the *Société française de philosophie* at a meeting held November 19, 1908. Authorized translation by Fred Rothwell.]

we have here to supersede and, if possible, exalt into one that is intelligible.

Philosophy has been seeking, ever since the time of Plato, in Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel, for a kind of connection which should be alike concrete and intelligible. Besides, there is nothing to prove that there exists only a sort of concrete relation: it is quite possible that there may be between religion and science a connection that is both intelligible and *sui generis*.

II. What, exactly, are the terms we have to bring together? In these days it is evidently less science and religion as objectively presented systems, than the scientific and the religious *spirits*. It is the scientific spirit which, by its own methods and from its own point of view, leaving out of account the results at which it arrives, sometimes regards itself as the negation *a priori* of the religious spirit. The latter in turn would regard itself as abdicating its position did it admit that its very existence could wholly be explained by scientific methods.

But do not the scientific and the religious spirits, when confronted with each other, appear to be in a relation of strict contradiction—a fact which, in the eyes of any man who respected the fundamental laws of logic, would immediately settle the question? Such a relation of contradiction might have existed between a scientific spirit imbued with dogmatic metaphysics, and a religious spirit identified with the letter of any positive religion. It is but right, however, to distinguish between the dogmatic scientific spirit and the strictly scientific spirit, or the sense of the superiority of experience; and also between the materialistic religious spirit and the strictly religious spirit, or the sense of the supremacy of the ideal.

Between the scientific spirit and the religious spirit, both strictly so called, there is no logical contradiction. Still, might not there be heterogeneity, pure and simple?

Shall we find the *intelligible relationship* between these two terms which we regard as demanded by the modern mind?

III. In what is strictly called reason, we possess a principle of judgment which enables us to give an impartial estimate of religion and science in so far as reason, in the concrete elements that distinguish it from simple logical mechanism, is made up of those data of science and life which the human intellect has comparatively succeeded in universalizing. And so it is for reason to examine the problem, and from its standpoint we now consider the matter.

1. Is science self-sufficient?

It is, practically speaking, from the scientific point of view. From that of reason, strictly so called, it is not, because it has for a condition that things should be given, and given things presuppose activities that produce them. Besides, science is not mechanically produced in the human mind; it presupposes original investigation, and this also is activity.

Science presupposes life.

2. What are the conditions of life, or more precisely, of human life?

For man, a being endowed with conscience, this problem not only signifies: In what conditions can human life, such as it is, exist?—it also signifies: In what conditions is a strictly human life possible and can it acquire all the power and excellence of which it is capable?

Reason may ask the second question as well as the first.

If, after asking this second question, we try to find its solution in history and in the human conscience, we see that a strictly human life, the life that tends to all that is best, necessarily implies, (1) a faith; (2) the representation of an ideal; (3) a sense of love corresponding to this faith and ideal. These three elements, when precisely ana-

lyzed, appear to be extra-scientific. Now it is just these which with ever-increasing distinctness constitute the form of the religious spirit.

Religion, then, is the higher motive principle of the human soul, the principle which enables it to transcend itself.

3. Religion is connected with science through the medium of life. Science brings reason to admit the reality of life. Religion supplies man with the means of imparting to his life the utmost possible power and value. In man, as he is presented to us, the will to seek the best has its principle, immediate or mediate, perceived or unperceived, in determinations which are the province of the religious spirit.

Thus the relation of religion to science is neither analytical nor synthetical. It is a relation that is contingent and yet rational. It is a progress wherein liberty is entreated without being compelled. Strictly speaking, it is a passing from fact to action or true being, and from being to power and to what ought to be.

IV. Is this theory satisfactory, respecting the scientific and the religious spirits?

1. In the name of science, the objection may be raised that while an incomplete science admits of the conception of activity, of the possible and the obligatory, as veritable realities, a complete science would reduce these notions to subjective illusions.

But can there be a complete science? Is being from all eternity a thing that is made, with the result that, once all the laws of nature are known, nature has nothing more to do than conform to the dictates of science? Or does being really come about with time, so that it is forever indispensable to observe it in order to become acquainted with it? It seems as though we should be begging the

question if we expected being to conform to science, and not science to being.

2. In the name of religion, the objection may be urged that the given religions contain many other elements than those just mentioned, and that to establish the legitimacy of religion in its purely formal aspect is but a poor justification of it.

It is clear that faith, the representation of an ideal, and love,—which are simple forms of will, intelligence, and feeling,—are by themselves only a frame in which each nation and individual, according to knowledge and character, tends to set a content increasingly true and worthy as well as capable of determining human life.

It remains certain, however, that the matter of given religions presents a truly religious character only if it is in harmony with this form. To have religious ideas, it is not sufficient to utter the name of God; while, on the other hand, it is possible to retain the thing though its name be changed.

The pure form of religion is still but an abstraction, because it is only those things that can be grasped by sense or imagination which appear to us as real. The letter, however, though indispensable to the spirit, is not to be confused therewith; it is a variable compromise between the spirit and the changing conditions of the environment in which the spirit must find its realization.

#### I.

Is the question of the relations between science and religion, which has exercised the human mind during the past few centuries, still a living one? Does it not now seem to consist of a rivalry between persons and powers, rather than of a genuine conflict of principles? I imagine that many, nowadays, are inclined to believe that we have

at last found the magic syllables which must insure peace once for all, in the word *separation*:

“Wenn sich zweie lieben sollen,  
Braucht man sie nur zu scheiden.”

Science, it is said, comes within the sphere of reason, and religion within that of feeling. Why should there be any conflict between these two powers—alike essential—of the human soul? If religion remains pure feeling, and science restricts itself to storing the mind with the laws that control the mutual relations of phenomena, then we cannot see how religion and science are ever to meet. They occupy two worlds outside of and alien to each other.

Up to a certain point, this separation may be realized in a society. It is seen to exist, indeed, in the consciousness of certain individuals who, in accordance with physiological, if not logical, laws, simultaneously accept different principles which they do not compare with each other. Still, in theory and for the future, the so-called “water-tight” system is no longer adequate to decide upon the relations between science and religion.

We live in an age of world-wide communication and comparison: nations, social classes, literature and science, art and life, society and individual, certain sciences set over against certain others, respectively clash and struggle for existence. Religion cannot possibly prove an exception to this law and stand unshaken by simply ignoring in the world the existence of everything save itself.

In more exact terms, science having successfully applied itself to biology, psychology, and sociology, as well as to mathematics and physics, perceives no limits to its sphere of influence, and professes to explain, along the lines of its own determinism, the appearance of religious as well as of all other phenomena. What matters it if religion exists wholly in feeling? A feeling is a mental

state, consequently an object whose conditions of existence come within the scope of science. Science will demonstrate why, given my temperament and my environment, I was bound to have certain religious tendencies, just as it demonstrates why I was bound to incur some particular illness.

Religion, on the other hand, driven back into the inmost depths of consciousness, becomes so feeble that it can no longer be recognized. What is there in common between this flickering, self-centered spark, afraid of being seen because an effort would at once be made to extinguish it, and the all-devouring fire which once professed to inflame the universe: Γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς!

Every true religion, in the first place, possesses an intellectual content, and in the second place, aims at manifesting itself in the world.

It may be that, in certain individuals, a radical dualism of religious faith and scientific knowledge is maintained, just as in certain treatises on psychology we find the material separation of the faculties; but neither the human consciousness, taken in its essence, which is unity and harmony, nor our modern societies, which by means of journals, reviews, and meetings of every kind are constantly bringing different men and different doctrines in contact with each other, will indefinitely maintain the coexistence of science and religion unless there exist between the two, intelligible relations of compatibility and harmony.

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What method must we follow to discover whether it is possible for science and religion to harmonize in an enlightened and introspective consciousness?

It is possible, following along experimental lines nowadays so prevalent both in philosophy and in other sciences, to set forth a method which consists in taking a few re-



markable instances of individuals who have reconciled and are now reconciling strong religious convictions with the cult of science, and trying to find by a process of analysis how in the consciousness of these men the reconciliation between the two disciplines comes about.

This purely descriptive method, however, will not supply us with results apt to influence our own conduct unless the reconciliation effected in these consciousnesses appears to have real value, not only from the point of view of the individuals in question but in itself, in other words, an objective value.

In order to find out objectively what is the relation between science and religion, shall we appeal to history? Will the study of the origin and of the vicissitudes of religion and science determine what it is that constitutes the essence of both alike?

But, then, according to the law of evolution which nowadays is held in such high esteem, both may have changed very considerably, and if we are dealing with ourselves here and not with others, if we inquire at the present time with what conclusion we are to side in order to live a life that conforms with the present state of the human mind, we shall require to consider religion and science as they appear at the present day, not as they may have existed among prehistoric peoples, or even in a society that immediately preceded our own.

What does this mean except that we must deal with the problem, not from the point of view of descriptive psychology or of history, but from that of reason?

We have only to arrive at an understanding as to the meaning of this word: reason. Is it the sole characteristic of reason to reduce the relations of difference given to us in nature to relations of identity and contradiction, in such a way that, if two things cannot be reduced to one and the same essence, they may be declared incompatible? If this

is reason, it will certainly be difficult to maintain the equal right of science and religion to existence. On the one hand, science and religion cannot be identified without being destroyed: however we interpret them, science is the explanation of things by things themselves, religion is faith in a relation of things to some higher power.

If then, in the sight of reason, radical irreducibility means a relation of opposition by contradiction, then science and religion are incompatible; reason insists on the one disappearing in presence of the other: "This will kill that!"

Science, moreover, exists and continues henceforth in all probability like nature itself, of which it is but an abridged and practically utilizable representation: *it is*; whereas religion cannot be conceived apart from faith in some thing which neither is nor can be given in nature.

If, then, reason is but the faculty of reasoning according to the principles of identity and contradiction, it seems difficult not to recognize that from the standpoint of reason religion is doomed to disappear before science, sooner or later.

But in reality reason shows us other relations than those of logical identity and contradiction. In the name of reason, what philosophers have always attempted to define is just that faculty, peculiar to man, of attributing a reality and value to relations which cannot be reduced to logical identity and incompatibility, purely and simply. Metaphysics is strictly the superposition of relations of this kind on simply logical relations. Such are the μέθεξις or the κοινωνία of Plato, the finality of Aristotle, the conjunction of terms in the intellectual intuition of Descartes, the moral necessity of Leibniz, the synthetic judgment of Kant, the synthesis of Hegel. Unlike science, whose ideal is to reduce the diverse to the identical, metaphysics attempts to find intelligible relations, relations of conformity between

different beings, even in so far as they are different and logically irreducible.

Besides, there is more than one sort of relation calculated to satisfy that faculty—the living sum total of the experiences and reflections of mankind—which we call reason. It is not by presenting *a priori* a definition of rational relationship, and then trying to find out syllogistically whether this definition applies to the given instance, that we can discover the rational relations between existing things: it is rather by engaging in an attempt to bring the real and the rational face to face and mutually determining each other. To understand is to adapt the reason to the object quite as much as to bring the object within the laws of reason.

## II.

As regards science and religion, what exactly are the terms we have to bring together?

These cannot be science and religion regarded as actual bodies of doctrines.

Science at the present time is no longer carried on deductively but rather inductively. It follows that none of its principles, not even the most general, are acquired in any final way. To exalt into a dogma any one of its present conclusions and set it over against religion, would be unjust. And it would be quite as unjust to argue that because science is always capable of improvement, we need take no notice of the difficulties it raises against religious affirmations. It is useless to say: religion is invincible, since it upholds its certainties where science acknowledges that it in turn affords only probabilities. The acquisitions of science are final, in the sense that its future progress will simplify, put in its place, absorb and supersede, but not destroy the experimental content of its present assertions. None the less is it a fact that a complete and final science

is an idle dream. Science is nothing else than the continual progress of the human mind, seeking for the explanation of things in things themselves.

And no less chimerical would it be to compare religion, as an *ensemble* of positive dogmas and determinate practices, with science as it is at present offered to us. In this case, which religion should we take? What value would the harmony or the disharmony established between science and some particular religion possess in the minds of those who profess a different religion? For even in these days, when we consider both dogma and practice, there is a striking difference, in the very heart of Christianity itself, between a Scotch Presbyterian and an Orthodox Greek.

Again, even if we thought we had set up an agreement between dogma and science, should we not in this be deceiving ourselves? Have words the same meaning in the religious as in the scientific order of things? If the man of science admits that there is no scientific law incapable of being belied by facts, does he thereby mean that science recognizes the possibility of a miracle as the production of a fact outside of all physical laws? Or does he not simply mean that, along with the known laws of our science, there may be cooperating others which are still unknown, and which may thus determine results that are at present inexplicable?

Neither the harmony nor the disharmony of present-day science with any particular body of religious doctrines, when we come to analyze it, has any real philosophic bearing.

At bottom, the conflict is far less between science and religion as given facts, than between the religious and the scientific spirits.

The scientific spirit consists in eliminating from the explanation of a given phenomenon, every cause that is not itself phenomenal, in explaining facts by facts, nature

by nature. Science has made the discovery that, in nature, not only are there laws or relatively permanent connections between facts, but that these laws come under one another so that we may set up the ideal of bringing them all under a single one.

Religion requires that each phenomenon, taken separately, shall be the object of a special decree emanating from a supernatural power, and that nature, in some of these phenomena in particular, shall testify to the operation of forces which do not belong to nature. For science, being is a unity and it is nature that is this being; for religion, being is a duality: it includes, apart from nature, God, who transcends it infinitely.

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Such is the real conflict, and we must recognize that it is far more profound than the opposition between a given scientific doctrine and some particular religious dogma would be.

It is not difficult to set forth the relation between the scientific spirit and the religious spirit as forming a regular contradiction. According to this view, we may say that science is the negation of the supernatural, and religion its affirmation; science depersonalizes all things, religion looks upon personality as their foundation. Science is explanation, religion is mystery.

It is clear that if, yielding to a taste for logical contrasts, I define nature as a system of mechanical forces and life as a spontaneity, the statement that there should be life in nature appears to be contradictory. For all that, life does exist in nature. We must beware of creating, by means of our concepts and verbal antitheses, contradictions which possibly correspond to nothing real.

What, then, are the scientific spirit and the religious spirit in reality, not according to some academic concept or

other? Up to quite recently, the scientific spirit might have been defined as the conviction that things are reducible to universal mechanism and determinism. Nor is it even nowadays a rare thing to hear religion defined as a belief in the possibility of miracles as an infringement of the laws of nature.

If we define religion and science in this way, no doubt the difficulty is irremediable. Indeed, the one denies the very thing which the other affirms. To blend them in one and the same consciousness, we must abandon the principle of contradiction.

But then, do such definitions still correspond to reality? Science is at present essentially experimental; hence it appears as though the mechanical form of determinism which was considered inherent in the laws of nature itself, were but an abstract conception, added by the dogmatic metaphysical spirit to the real laws of things from without. A science that affirms mechanical determinism as being in things themselves and not merely in a certain metaphysical conception of things, ceases to be simply experimental: it is a philosophy of science, not plain science alone.

On the other hand, the simple statement of the extreme variety of religions compels the philosopher to distinguish between religions and religion, and to endeavor to find, by the aid of reason, what there is truly characteristic and original in the religious spirit.

The idea that religion is essentially the belief in a power which at one time leaves nature to follow its course and at another opposes it, is inseparable from a conception of science according to which we should be enabled to know certain natural laws as absolutely simple, primary, and universal. This way of interpreting natural laws is nothing else than regarding the laws of nature as belonging to the same category as laws decreed by a legislator. In this latter case, the law is first decreed, and afterward either

obeyed or violated. Scientific laws, however, are not prior to facts; they recapitulate them. If a law is violated, it is not because an opposing power has intervened, it is either because the law in question did not possess the generality attributed to it, or because some other law happened to be involved in the phenomenon, or again because the latter does not come under our present scientific categories. Laws are devised for the explanation of facts; facts are not like those examples in old grammar-books, showing us the language as a rule obedient enough, though at times quite opposed to the laws and precepts of the grammarians.

Along with the transformation of dogmatic into experimental science, there disappears the notion that a miracle is an outrage upon nature; religion can no longer consist in devising and coaxing forces which are stronger than those of nature, which are therefore homogeneous with these, therefore natural still, and which have, in-reality, the same claim to come within the compass of science as have laws actually discovered. The force that produces thunder was supernatural so long as it could not be brought within the compass of electricity.

As against modern experimental science, the supernatural can no longer be interpreted in a material sense, thus regarding it as a still natural and simply unexplored essence. It can only really be distinguished from nature if it is strictly spiritual, that is to say, if it is the expression of spirit as life, action, creation and realization of the true, the just, the beautiful, the good and the ideal, in opposition to matter as the supposedly permanent, homogeneous, and identical foundation for the sum total of phenomena.

In other terms, whereas the principle of science, whose object is to determine, classify, and systematize the relations of things to one another, is the supremacy of experience; the principle of religion is the supremacy of the ideal. The religious spirit believes in the existence, the

autonomy, and the power of the ideal, along with all those attributes that we regard as necessary for its existence and efficacy.

Thus conceived, the religious spirit and the scientific spirit evidently do not hold to each other that relation of logical incompatibility apparent when they are both interpreted in a dogmatic and materialistic sense.

Science takes into consideration objectively given phenomena and their mutual relations: it knows nothing of their generating causes. It is based on the postulate that it is useless for us to inquire into the cause that produces phenomena, in order to be enabled to connect them with one another, to classify and systematize them; along these lines it systematizes only so far as observation will allow.

Religion is connected with the springs of being. It is not simply a moving body of feelings, an instigator of actions; it is itself feeling, thought, life, action, the direct relation of souls to one another, the converse and communion of spirit with spirit.

Hence it does not interfere with science, for, in whatever way its action is expressed in the world of phenomena, it admits that its external manifestations shall be objects of science, exactly like all other phenomena. It does not inquire what will become of the scientific explanation of the final residua of its actions. How can the brain that generates thoughts be concerned regarding the name of the chemical substances which will be found in its ashes?

There is no contradiction between the religious spirit and the scientific spirit, as men have imagined. All the same, we have stated that, in order to maintain equally two different principles, it is not sufficient that human reason should see them actually coexist, it must discern between them some intelligible and rational relation which will make of them not simply two objects set alongside of each other, but the conjoint elements of one and the same



harmony. Is there such a relation between the religious and the scientific spirits, that is, a relation not only of non-contradiction, but of mutual conformity?

### III.

What, exactly, is the point of view from which we must examine this question? It can neither be that of science nor that of religion; for then the problem would already have been solved, though in two contradictory ways. Is there a third point of view?

That of reason, strictly so called, appears to satisfy the conditions required. Reason is not the principle of religion, for it is essentially intellectual and universal, whereas religion is life and personal consciousness. Reason cannot be confused with the general form of science, for the latter tends to reduce the diverse to the identical, whereas reason aims at maintaining and reconciling, while respecting their diversity, all modes of being which seem to it to possess real value.

What is reason?

It is but too evident that it is not simple logic. Logic is relative: such or such a principle being admitted, by hypothesis, it is logical or illogical to deduce therefrom such or such a conclusion. Reason comes to an immediate pronouncement: this may be logical but it is not reasonable.

Reason is not an *ensemble* of innate, immutable principles, laid down *a priori*, as dogmatic metaphysicians supposed. It is not the revelation, inscribed on the tablets of our consciousness, of a transcendent stereotyped truth that has come down to us from all eternity. It is not ready-made but makes itself, and has a history of its own. It is formed, as Descartes saw, of the scientific knowledge and practical experiences on which our intellect is nourished. It is that portion of the data of science and life

which human reflection, speaking relatively, has universalized.

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If reason is such, is there any connection between science and religion, from this point of view?

Take science, first, for it is science that at the present time demands the assent of our reason immediately. In scientific experience, strictly so called, it possesses a material guaranty of universal value which cannot be found elsewhere.

Science, from its own point of view, is self-sufficient. For its self-construction it has nowadays nothing to do with transcendent principles or ends. It is reduced to a mode of determining facts and their observable connections. Does it follow that it is self-sufficient from the point of view of reason?

Science accepts things as given; its duty and honor consists in absolute submission to the conditions of this given. Being fundamentally experimental, it will always refrain from pronouncing upon the first elements of this given, or upon the principle according to which this given changes. It is indebted for its very existence to the strange circumstance that certain aggregates, certain complex connections, are in nature relatively permanent. It has to do with—and can only have to do with—states, not with true causes.

It therefore follows that, in the sight of reason, science necessarily posits the existence of being as the model, radically distinct from itself, of which it endeavors to give us a translation that can be utilized, from the human standpoint. An adequate science, one convertible with being, appears a contradictory concept, seeing that science has become essentially experimental.

Nor is this all. Precisely because our science is other than being it requires expedients, modes of representation

which, in all their elements, are not supplied by being itself. We are no longer living at a time when science sprang fully armed from facts, like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter. Science is concerned only with facts, but it is the human mind that constructs it. The human mind builds it up from concepts, signs, and symbols which it invents in order to deal, in its own way, with objects heterogeneous to itself. It imprints its stamp on facts.

And so, just as science presupposes being and is unable to reduce it, it also presupposes spirit of which it is the product. It is the living relation, daily more strict and subtle, of spirit with being.

What does this mean except that, from the standpoint of reason, science presupposes: externally, a creative activity that supplies it with matter for observation; internally, a similarly creative activity which contrives workable symbols, fitted to represent inaccessible realities.

Science presupposes life, both without and within ourselves.

In its turn, what is presupposed by the life of which we are conscious, that which concerns us directly, human life?

There are things without which we *cannot* live: in so far as we seek after these things, our life does not transcend in dignity the universal animal life. There are things without which we *do not will* to live: strictly speaking, it is the search after these things, materially useless, that stamps us as human beings.

What are these special conditions of human life?

Man seeks after certain things because he attributes to them an intrinsic value or worth. He does not consider them good simply because they either are or appear to him to be good. He subordinates himself to them, making his own goodness consist in adapting himself, submitting and sacrificing himself to them. The most precise manifesta-

tion of this faculty is the sense of duty, which is found to be the origin of every heroic act of the human will, and the disappearance of which cannot be imagined without our seeing human life change its aspect and fall back into a state resembling pure animality, from the moral point of view.

Now, the notion of absolute value, the notion of duty, cannot be reduced to strict knowledge: it is a matter of faith. It implies a risk, an adventure, a sort of logical absurdity. I do not know if what I attempt is possible, nor if myself and my fellow-beings will profit by it, but I know I ought to act so, whatever the consequences. To characterize such certainty, there is no other word than that of faith.

Still, while I believe in the duty of pursuing certain ends, I inquire of what it is exactly that these higher ends consist. Faith necessarily tries to attain to the knowledge and understanding of its object.

We may give the name of ideal to that supreme object, the pursuit of which is the essence of human activity. Each of the determinate forms we set up as an object to pursue is an intermediate term between reality as we see it and the supreme ideal. This latter is conceived by us as the perfection of truth and beauty, justice and good, consciousness and personality, in so far as this perfection is not only an abstract possibility but a necessary reality. The ideal is that which connects perfection and existence, their indissoluble unity.

Man, in a word, cannot limit himself to a contemplation of the ideal by his intellect, and a submission to it by his will. His union with the ideal can only be consummated by love, and the highest of all duties is that of loving. The pursuit of the ideal, individual perfection itself, presupposes the common efforts of human individuals. Not one of them could, by his own strength alone, become all he is

capable of being, and do all he is capable of doing. The common love of the ideal and, at the same time, the love of men for one another, is a third trait of a fully human life.

Man, if he is to be fully man, must not be content with living, he must devote his life to the practice of duty, the search after the ideal, the communion of one consciousness with others in love.

Are these three objects: duty, ideal, and love, strictly natural?

Assuredly they are conformable to reason, which, of itself, perceives their necessity for the human soul. But then, our reason is a state, an actual form of our intellect, it is not a first principle. To say that a belief has its original cause in reason, is to act like a psychologist attempting to discover the origin of the various languages in the very rules that grammarians deduce from them.

It is remarkable that those objects which the reason regards as indispensable to a truly human culture, are just those declared to be preeminently religious objects in that one religion which is considered as among the greatest.

What is the greatest commandment of the law, Jesus is asked. He replies: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: this is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Duty, belief in God, love: the commandments regarded by Jesus as preeminent contain these three elements, and these three alone.

Now, the work of Jesus is manifestly a religious work.

And, indeed, if these three objects form only a part of what the religious consciousness generally comprises in the idea of religion, none the less do they come in reality within the scope of religion, strictly so called, and not of simple morals, or what is called natural religion.

The sense of duty may be recognized by the psychologist or the moralist as actually present in the human soul; but where does it come from and what is it worth? Kant himself sees that these questions cannot be answered by the human intellect, whose function it is to explain fact by fact, being by being: here we have to find the springs of being.

Similarly, the concept of God is that of an unobservable reality, affirmed to exist, from the very fact that it is outside of all knowable conditions of existence.

And love, deep within the life of the individual, is the creation of a fuller life, in which divers individuals hold communion and the personality, far from being effaced, becomes more distinct and original.

It is indeed possible, by changing the meaning of the words: reason and nature, to maintain that these phenomena are also explained by reason alone and nature alone, just as it is possible, in another way—concluding, like Saint Augustine, that man possesses nothing but what he has received—to attribute to divine action all that man imagines he thinks and does of himself.

In fact, we find that the historians of philosophy are for the most part more inclined to explain such concepts as the categorical imperative of Kant or the intellectual love of Spinoza by an influx of religious tradition, than to account for the evangelical doctrine of the gift of oneself by the reflection of natural reason alone.

This is because the notions of duty, ideal, and love bring into human life a profound dualism which is alien to the simple idea of nature and reason.

To try to find, apart from being, the way to modify being and make it more perfect, is the property of religious thought. If we insist on giving the name of rational thought to this thought, then, by an abuse of language, we are calling reason the very thing that religion calls faith, grace, God, Providence.

Thus, through the medium of the notion of life, religion is connected with science. The man who reflects on science is led to attribute a reality to his own life; and the man who would fully live the human life must believe in duty, hold up perfection as his model, and devote himself in love. Now, acting in this way, he opens up a way in his soul to what is called religion.

Thus interpreted, can the relation of religion to science be called rational?

Evidently this relation is not simply a logical one. Science neither contains religion nor does religion contain science. The transition from science to religion is possible; it is not necessary.

Is it then but a simple conjunction of fact, based on the ascertained statement that certain men, in the course of their life, associate evangelical dreams with the pure and scrupulous cult of science? The deduction we have just attempted goes beyond such a result as this. Whereas science considers that which is in its actually given being, religion goes back to the origins and initial determination of being. Its objective is the ideal and the possible, what ought to be and the realization of what ought to be.

Now, the passing from what is to what ought to be is not logically necessary, neither is it logically arbitrary and irrational; it presents that solidarity in contingency which is actually the kind of connection that reason applies itself to determine. It is a special relation, perhaps a unique one of its kind. Now, it is too simple a matter to deny the existence of a relation under the pretext that we see no way of reconciling it with the logical relations, strictly so called. Life is made up of relations that are extra-logical, and yet real. It is such a relationship that unites science and religion. Though particularly difficult to define, it is better to attempt an imperfect definition of it than to deny it *a priori*.

The relation of science to religion recalls, we might say, that of actual language, relatively fixed and determinate, to living thought, which is its soul and origin; or rather the relation of an artist's work, apparently endowed with an existence and a unity of its own, to the creative and free genius which gives this work not only its existence, but the very unity and logic that characterize it.

## IV.

It may be that objections will be raised to the theory here set forth.

Scientists may allege that, though an incomplete science always leaves outside of itself some empty space into which religion may find its way, science *per se*, as a whole, explains everything, fills all the regions of being, and in consequence, relegates religion to the realm of idle fancy. In theory, we may say, if not actually, science resolves into data of experience the concepts of the possible, obligation, value, the sacred, the infinite, religious faith, feelings of divine love, divine presence and activity, as well as the chemical, physical, and mechanical forces. Science regards the word "inexplicable" as having no other meaning than "not yet explained."

Such, in effect, is the postulate of science. It is from this point of view that it interrogates nature. Still, a question is not an answer, and that the solution should do away with the datum is unintelligible. An experimental science presupposes a being set up for its observation; all it can affirm is that, at some particular moment, it has grasped all the generating principles of the things under investigation, and no longer needs to observe them.

Besides, how could it affirm that the future of being is wholly predetermined, from this time forward? Science, such as the progress of philosophy has made it, dwells on



uniformities, analogies, correspondencies, but it neither attains nor seeks to attain to the origins and conditions, either of uniformity or of change, that reign throughout nature. It neither knows nor wishes to know if being is limited to being, or if it lives.

Science *presupposes* being, it cannot be substituted for it.

\* \* \*

No doubt, also, we may foresee an objection on the side of religion.

Is it indeed religion, effective and concrete, with its own distinctive and specific characteristics, whose legitimacy has been established in the foregoing deduction? Have we really superseded so-called natural religion, so inadequate to the religious mind, or even simple rational morals?

It is somewhat difficult to reduce to unity or to a few leading points—so as to grasp and examine them all together—the objections that may be raised from this point of view. What are the component elements of a positive religion? The answer will vary according to the religion professed, each person being inclined to look upon all the parts of his religion as equally essential. Where is the line of demarcation between a natural religion and a revealed religion? What is the supernatural, what is revelation? Is the religion which, according to the preaching of Christ, may be summed up as love of God and love of one's neighbor, a natural or a revealed religion? Is the origin of the myths and rites, with which the religions of old were overburdened, to be found in genuine supernatural revelations or in the workings of man's imagination?

There is a mode of insisting that a religion shall contain revealed and supernatural elements, which tends to nothing less than the downfall of religions, the supernat-

ural postulated being actually one that is decidedly incompatible with the conditions of modern science.

And there is a system of morals, a religion presented as natural which in reality is more than a mere system of morals, more than a simply natural religion, because it contains principles that cannot be reduced to being as given to us by experience, because it implies a supernaturalistic conception of nature itself. When Pascal writes: "Man infinitely transcends man," he means that in human nature itself, examined in its inmost depths, we find the supernatural and the stamp of divine activity.

Faith, the ideal, love, in their true meaning, are indeed supernatural elements, in the meaning that a sane philosophy attributes to this metaphor. And it is into the sphere of religion, not of morals only, that we are brought by the precept of Jesus: Thou shalt love God above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself. To give oneself, to sacrifice oneself, if necessary, in order to further the coming of an ideal kingdom, to draw one's strength, joy, and being from an invisible being whose existence our senses deny, how could such conduct be anything but religious? What other activity, distinct from this, is more religious?

Besides, the theory here set forth does not aim at reducing religion to its purely formal elements, and excluding its positive determinations, its dogmas and rites; on the contrary, it finds its natural complement in the other theory, that form demands a formula; it abides by the profound saying of Fichte: "*Die Formel ist die grösste Wohlthat für den Menschen.*"

This should not be taken to mean that the concrete formula, matter, is simply to be deduced from form; a thing that can scarcely be conceived, and which Kant himself really never thought of doing.

Though the form of religious life is in some way necessarily present in the consciousness of the man who seeks,

as Pascal says, to transcend himself in order to be completely human, its matter comes from either inspiration or tradition, written or oral; it is given by teachings and practices whose origin more or less escapes our observation, and in certain cases it also may be called supernatural.

In reality, this matter is more or less one with form. The more exactly it corresponds to form, the more it is deserving of respect and beneficially efficacious. It is modified, either in the meaning attributed to it, or in the elements of which it is made up, in so far as such modifications seem necessary to keep it in harmony with the sum total of human knowledge as also with pure religious feeling.

Religion is spirit, living spirit, engaged in transforming the entire world. The forms and practices which this spirit approves and adopts are those that enable it to accomplish its task.

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